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Anne-Valérie Dulac

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“Jewels in crystal for some prince to buy”: Praising Eyes in *Love’s Labour’s Lost*

Anne-Valérie Dulac

1 In her now dated analysis of *Love’s Labour’s Lost*, published in 1936, Dame Frances Yates insisted upon the play’s many references to light, eyes and vision: the early comedy, according to the English historian, is “full of eyes”.[1] In a much more recent study, Neil Vallely compellingly maintains that “light is the means through which the characters see and conceptualise the world”.[2] Although offering a different approach, both authors show how metaphors related to eyes and eyebeams - whether intromissive or extramissive – open onto a reflexion upon man’s optical relation to world, or visual mode of cognition. The optical elements in the play have thus already been thoroughly discussed over the past decades.[3] This is why I will be probing into the inclusion of sight into a slightly different metaphorical network.

2 In addition to physical and at times metaphysical echoes, which do undeniably shed light on many an obscure passage in *Love’s Labour’s Lost*, my contention is that the ubiquitous visual metaphor is grounded upon an economy of vision that may also be read – or seen – as a vision of economy, as a site/sight of commercially-defined transactions and negotiations. There is indeed a potentially remunerative or costly dimension to seeing in the play, with sight being staged as either a profit or loss experience stemming from the mostly uneven visual relations struck between the players on stage. In order to better grasp the dramatic foundations of this visual economy, I will be exploring ways of seeing in relation to praising, a notion that is frequently and strikingly attached to vision in the play. The Oxford English Dictionary first defines praising as “commending or lauding”. But praising carries more than just this meaning: to praise, among many other senses, is also to “fix the price of something for sale”.[4] As a result, praising may sometimes be heard as a synonym for prizing or reckoning, another recurring idea in the comedy. Praising eyes, an essential feature of Petrarchan poetry, therefore takes on a supplementary pecuniary meaning.

3 I shall first deal with fairness in the play, which, although supposedly measured by the judgment of the eyes, is never given a fair value and is instead counted as open to varying appreciations and liable to conflicting estimations. I will then inquire into the intrinsic link that is drawn between eyes and fluctuating prices, before turning to the reasons behind such a paradoxical economy of vision, with visual exchanges never amounting to such a sum as shall balance gains and losses or fully reconcile creditors and debtors.

Fair ladies at fairs: the chapman's praise

4 The word "praise" is used eighteen times in *Love's Labour's Lost:* in no other play does it appear as frequently, which may give a first indication of how important setting prices is in the overall unfolding of events. The Princess is the first to voice an unequivocal suggestion of a bond between eyes and prices:

> PRINCESS. Good Lord Boyet, my beauty, though but mean,
> Needs not the painted flourish of your praise.
> Beauty is bought by the judgment of the eye,
> Not uttered by base sale of chapmen's tongues:
> I am less proud to hear you tell my worth
> Than you much willing to be counted wise
> In spending your wit in the praise of mine.
> *Love's Labour's Lost*, II.i.13-19[5]

5 The footnote to this passage in William C. Carroll's edition explains that "in fending off Boyet's flattery, the Princess develops an extended metaphor of crass commercialism in his distribution of praise, through 'tell' (17), 'counted' (18), 'spending' (19)".[6] In the light of such association, the audience is led to equate "praising" and overpricing or mispricing. Although the Princess states that beauty is indeed to be "bought", she rebukes Boyet sharply for *paying* homage to her fairness with a "chapm[a]n's tongue" rather than with the "judgment of [his] eye", thereby spending his wit in profligate fashion. The French lord's prodigal praise only devalues the Princess's beauty's real price, following what Lorna Hutson calls an "inflationary and cheapening" effect.[7] As the Princess makes it clear, the chapman's praising strategy works in paradoxical ways: the greater the praise, the cheaper the praised. This contradictory logic is the same as the one voiced in *Troilus and Cressida* by Paris, who, countering Diomedes's scathing portrait of Helen, answers thus:

> PARIS. Fair Diomed, you do as chapmen do,
> Dispraise the thing that you desire to buy.
> But we in silence hold this virtue well:
> We'll not commend what we intend to sell.
> *Troilus and Cressida*, IV.i.77-80[8]

6 Paris refuses to practise the seller's art and commend Helen in order to raise Helen's price and value in the eyes of Diomedes, who, conversely, fully masters and exploits the buyer's tricks. This passage from *Troilus and Cressida* echoes an earlier moment in the play when Troilus and Hector discuss the very meaning and measurement of value:

> TROILUS. What's aught but as 'tis valued?
> HECTOR. But value dwells not in particular will.

> It holds his estimate and dignity
> As well wherein 'tis precious of itself
> As in the prizer. 'Tis mad idolatry
> To make the service greater than the god;
> And this will dotes that is inclinable
> To what infectiously itself affects
> Without some image of th'affected merit.
> *Troilus and Cressida*, II.ii.52-59

7 According to Hector, the exact value of persons or things stands halfway between the prized object's intrinsic worth and the prizer's own judgment on how precious it is to him. In addition to the religious undertones made evident in these lines, the commercial relation implied by the praising process resonates throughout. In other words, to value something is to strike a contract of sorts, a balanced agreement between the prizer and the prized. Outside such a well-adjusted estimation, affection runs the risk of turning into infection.

8 The blurring of the distinction between affection and infection is also a crucial idea in *Love's Labour's Lost*, and is persistently related to the eye motif, as exemplified by the following conversation between Berowne and the Princess:

> BEROWNE. They are infected; in their heart it lies.
> They have the plague, and caught it of your eyes.
> These lords are visited; you are not free,
> For the Lord's token on you do I see.
> PRINCESS. No, they are not free that gave these tokens to us.
> BEROWNE. Our states are forfeit, seek not to undo us.
> *Love's Labour's Lost*, V.ii.420-426

9 Berowne's use of the word "free" can be glossed as "free of infection",[9] so that Berowne here implies that the Princess and her ladies may be as infected as the men are. But the Princess's answer opens up the meaning of "free", as she claims the tokens the women have received are both a symptom of infection and a sign of their suitor's generosity, thereby leading Berowne into begging her not to ruin the men ("seek not to undo us"). These tokens, seeing as they testify to the infection caught from the ladies' eyes as much as to the men's liberality, are described as a form of material praise, as a way for the men to try and "buy" the women's company, to borrow a phrase from the final scene of the play:

> FERDINAND. More measure of this measure! Be not nice.
> ROSALINE. We can afford no more at such a price.
> FERDINAND. Prize you yourselves. What buys your company?
> ROSALINE. Your absence only.
> *Love's Labour's Lost*, V.ii.222-225

10 The tokens sent by the men act as either the visible symptoms of a visual infection[10] or as the price offered by the courtiers to earn the favour of the prized objects of their affection. This may account for the Princess' reaction upon receiving the men's presents:

> PRINCESS. Sweet hearts, we shall be rich ere we depart,
> If fairings come thus plentifully in.

> A lady walled about with diamonds!
> *Love's Labour's Lost*, V.ii.1-3

11 The word "fairing" originally refers to gifts bought at fairs.[11] Navarre and his men are consequently portrayed as purchasing praising material from chapmen with a view to translate their affection into something numbered and measurable through accumulation. Fairs, fairness and fairings conflate the judgment of the eye and the chapman's trade, as in Berowne's praise of Rosaline:

> BEROWNE. Of all complexions the culled sovereignty,
> Do meet as at a fair in her fair cheek.
> *Love's Labour's Lost*, IV.iii.225-226

12 Countable praise thus becomes the most prominent vehicle of declarations of affection/infection, whereby the men's strategy meets that of the chapman. The French ladies frequently acknowledge and mock this confusion, overthrowing the (chap)men's sport and amusedly commenting upon the telling slippage between different kinds of "fair":

> ROSALINE. Nay, I have verses too, I thank Berowne;
> The numbers true, and were the numbering too,
> I were the fairest goddess on the ground.
> I am compared to twenty thousand fairs.
> *Love's Labour's Lost*, V.ii.34-37

13 The metrical "numbers" of the praising poem bring about another form of valuation of Rosaline's numbered fairness, weighed against "twenty thousand fairs", the sheer figure and suggested exaggeration of such praise bearing witness to inflation and mispricing. Although the numbers of his poem are "true", Berowne's price/praise does not correspond to Rosaline's own estimation, as inferred from her use of the conditional ("were"). As a consequence, the ladies' fairness is not appreciated through the fair judgment of the men's eyes but is instead valued by chapmen numbering and negotiating their prices at fairs, regardless of the women's actual "mean" beauty (II.i.13).

14 Similarly, the "lady walled about with diamonds" which the Princess receives from the King parallels Boyet's "painted flourish" (II.i.14). The flowers of rhetoric – chapmen's unnecessary cosmetic inflation – anticipate the richly adorned painted portrait set in its diamond-studded frame and the verbose poem supplementing it: "Ware pencils, ho!"[12]

15 The unbalance hence created between fairness and its numbers turns beauty into a highly relative and cheapened currency, whose value is set by arbitrary speculation rather than by fair estimation:

> BASSANIO. [...] Look on beauty
> And you shall see 'tis purchased by the weight,
> Which therein works a miracle in nature,
> Making them lightest that wear most of it.
> *The Merchant of Venice*, III.ii.88-91

16 In Bassanio's words, "look[ing] on beauty" is enough to "see" the paradox in purchasing beauty "by the weight". The eyes of the men of Navarre are so infected that they fail to see these contradictions and misprice their own trade. This is perhaps best

epitomised by the dramatically ironic moment when Berowne, of all men, dismisses the "seller's praise" and tongue, while he in fact never praises his lady in a "gentler" way than fellow chapmen:

> BEROWNE. [...] Lend me the flourish of all gentle tongues –
> Fie, painted rhetoric! O, she needs it not.
> To things of sale a seller's praise belongs,
> She passes praise; then praise too short doth blot.
> *Love's Labour's Lost*, IV.iii.229-232

17 The courtiers' constant misprisions[13] may explain why the only man the Princess agrees to pay back on stage and without condition is the forester. The latter, contrary to the King and his men, uses his tongue in a way deemed fair enough by the Princess. In the scene confronting the two personae, the French sovereign's tacit self-appraisal of her intrinsic value meets the "prizer's" offer, paving the way for the only mutually consented transaction in the play:[14]

> PRINCESS. Then, forester, my friend, where is the bush
> That we must stand and play the murderer in?
> FORESTER. Hereby, upon the edge of yonder coppice;
> A stand where you may make the fairest shoot.
> PRINCESS. I thank my beauty, I am fair that shoot,
> And thereupon thou speak'st the fairest shoot.
> FORESTER. Pardon me, madam, for I meant not so.
> PRINCESS. What, what? First praise me and again say no?
> O short-lived pride! Not fair? Alack for woe!
> FORESTER. Yes, madam, fair.
> PRINCESS. Nay, never paint me now:
> Where fair is not, praise cannot mend the brow.
> Here, good my glass, take this for telling true; [*giving him money*]
> Fair payment for foul words is more than due.
> *Love's Labour's Lost*, IV.i.7-19

18 The forester is rewarded for holding up a "true" mirror to the Princess ("take this for telling *true*", "good my *glass*", my emphasis) rather than presenting her with a painted picture of her "credit" (IV.i.26). "Praise, an outward part" (IV.i.32) is never intrinsically attached to the prized object and is therefore left to the appreciation of an outside "prizer", whose reckoning may or may not add up to a fair judgment in true colours.[15]

"The shop of your eyes"

19 Why do the male prizers prove unable to speak in the ladies' "condign praise" (I.ii.22)? If the audience is to believe the Princess, "Beauty is bought by the judgment of the eye, / Not utter'd by base sale of chapmen's tongues" (II.i.15-16). This statement implies that the "heart's still rhetoric disclosed with eyes" (II.i.225) is a fitter index of prices than the eloquent seller's praise. The *topos* of the eyes' silent rhetoric was a staple feature of early modern poetry,[16] as shown in the final quatrain and couplet of Shakespeare's sonnet 23:

> O, let my books be then the eloquence
> And dumb presagers of my speaking breast,
> Who plead for love and look for recompense

> More than that tongue that more hath more express'd.
> O, learn to read what silent love hath writ:
> To hear with eyes belongs to love's fine wit.
> Sonnet 23, l. 9-14

20 The rhyme between "eloquence" and "recompense" poetically embodies the idea that only dumb praise can bring the lover his expected reward: the silent judgment of the eyes is deemed a truly remunerative move, as opposed to vocal praise. In *Love's Labour's Lost*, the dramatic conflict laid out by the Princess between visual purchasing and voluble commendation is also conveyed through the polysemic use of the word "utter" ("Not utter'd by base sale of chapmen's tongues", II.i.16). Although the now current and most common meaning of utter is to give expression to something or to give out in an audible voice, the obsolete sense of "putt[ing] (goods, wares, etc.) forth or upon the market; issu[ing], offer[ing] or expos[ing] for sale or barter" was "in very frequent use from c1540 to c1655".[17] A chapman uttering beauty's praise – or price – in a "base sale" may thus have been heard by an early modern audience, familiar with the economic connotations of the term, as a mere commercial transaction.[18] In so doing, the sellers deal in a currency that can never allocate a fair value to the prized lady. To utter could also mean "to give currency to (money, coin, notes, etc.); to put into circulation; *esp*. to pass or circulate (base coin, forged notes, etc.) as legal tender."[19] Could it be one of the reasons why the circulation of eloquent praise through "significant[s]" (III.i.114) and "counsel[s]" (III.i.147) is first associated with remuneration and later on hindered by the bearer's failure to "reckon" anything or anyone?[20] The repetitions and echoes to be heard at the end of the opening scene of the third act emphasise the near-mechanical nature of this transaction. This first appears through the similar sentences used by Armado and Berowne when asking Costard to bear their letters to Jaquenetta and Rosaline. Armado's words ("Bear this significant [*Gives a letter*] to the country maid Jaquenetta. There is remuneration [*Gives a coin*]", III.i.113-115) cannot but echo through Berowne's own, pronounced only moments afterwards:

> BEROWNE. [...] Ask for her,
> And to her white hand see thou do commend
> This sealed-up counsel. [*Gives a letter*] There's thy guerdon [*Gives a coin*]: go.
> *Love's Labour's Lost*, III.i.145-147

Costard also reacts similarly to the repeated sequence (handing out a letter first and then offering a coin to the messenger): in both cases, Costard is ignorant of the word used to designate the coin he receives. "Remuneration" and "guerdon" become "verbal coins"[21] whose true value Costard is unable to determine,[22] thus anticipating his "ill[ness] at reckoning" (I.ii.34), i.e. at judging or considering the identity of the person he brings the letters to.[23]

21 In *Love's Labour's Lost*, beauty uttered is beauty exposed both for sale and to potential devaluation or loss (as in the case of the "lost" or misplaced letters). This also transpires through Berowne's description of astronomers versed in naming stars yet missing out on sheer contemplation. Eyes were most commonly compared to stars in early modern and especially Petrarchan poetry, so that the following passage may be heard as another illustration of the conflicting values of silent observation and wordy praise:

> Small have continual plodders ever won,
> Save base authority from others' books.
> These earthly godfathers of heaven's lights,
> That give a name to every fixed star,
> Have no more profit of their shining nights
> Than those that walk and wot not what they are.
> Too much to know is to know nought but fame,
> And every godfather can give a name.
> *Love's Labour's Lost*, I.i.86-93

22 Tellingly enough, Berowne calls the authority of books "base". The same adjective is later used by the Princess to defame the chapmen's "profits", those recorded in their own (account) books, used for reckoning in numbers the value of their wares. Yet although there is no profit to be made from naming ("These earthly godfathers [...] / Have no more *profit* of their shining nights", my emphasis), quiet contemplation of eyes/stars seems impossible in the play, considering how astronomical lore is conveyed in a ridiculously vast array of words and how pedants and curates alike relish the accumulation of synonyms for the moon: Dyctinna, Phoebe, Luna (IV.ii.35).

23 But women's eyes are not the only ones to be praised in this two-way logic bringing prizer and prized face to face. Men's praising eyes, those purchasers of beauty, are sometimes "o'erthrown" by the Princess and her followers, as though there were no such visual trade in the play as sight by sight o'erthrown. The men's own judgment of their visual capacities first testifies to their self-esteem, as is expounded by Berowne:

> But love, first learned in a lady's eyes,
> Lives not alone immured in the brain,
> But with the motion of all elements
> Courses as swift as thought in every power,
> And gives to every power a double power
> Above their functions and their offices.
> It adds a precious seeing to the eye [...].
> *Love's Labour's Lost*, IV.iii.296-302

24 The men think their affection doubles the power and function of their beauty-buying eyes, thereby making them "precious" and endowing them with greater value. Yet this added value paradoxically leads to the very commodification of men's precious eyes, removing them from (purchasing) power and turning sellers into buyers. Moth, when advising Armado to pose as a melancholy lover, first suggests this:

> MOTH. No, my complete master: but to jig off a tune at the tongue's end, canary to it with your feet, humour it with turning up your eyelids, sigh a note and sing a note, sometime through the throat, as if you swallowed love with singing love, sometime through the nose, as if you snuffed up love by smelling love; with your hat penthouse-like o'er the shop of your eyes [...].
> (*Love's Labour's Lost*, III.i.8-13)

25 The witty page imagines Armado posing with his hat low on his eyes, like an awning on a shop, hiding it partially, in anticipation, perhaps, of the speechless vizards of the Muscovites. Throughout the comedy, the eyes of men in love are hidden behind sloping roofs or masks, screening the precious crystal inside, the better to advertise it: Moth here offers commercial advice to Armado in order to catch Jaquenetta's eye and lead her towards the shop of his own. The penthouse metaphor as such may be a reference

to the then common practice of placing lattices in front of foreigners' shop windows in early modern London:

> Strangers and foreigners were already subject to many restrictions. By the terms of City custom the right to engage in retail trade was reserved to freemen, and any transaction between non-freemen was termed 'foreign bought and sold', the penalty for which was forfeiture of the goods. Non-freemen were entitled to pursue their trades provided that they placed lattices before their windows so that their wares could not be seen from the street.[24]

26 The Spaniard and the Muscovites could not have exposed their wares as freely as citizens, or as the King of Navarre in his own kingdom, upon discovering the Princess:

> BOYET. Why, all his behaviours did make their retire
> To the court of his eye, peeping thorough desire.
> His heart, like an agate with your print impressed,
> Proud with his form, in his eye pride expressed.
> His tongue, all impatient to speak and not see,
> Did stumble with haste in his eyesight to be.
> All senses to that sense did make their repair,
> To feel only looking on fairest of fair.
> Methought all his senses were locked in his eye,
> As jewels in crystal for some prince to buy,
> Who, tendering their own worth from where they were glassed,
> Did point you to buy them, along as you passed.
> *Love's Labour's Lost*, II.i.230-241

27 By "adding a tongue" to dumb eloquence (II.i.249) and "mak[ing] a mouth" of men's eyes (II.i.248), Boyet depicts the King as prized rather than as prizer, in a silent display of affection turned into a base commercial offer by Boyet the "lovemonger" (II.i.250). Contrary to Armado's shop-window, hidden behind lattices, the King's precious eyes are displayed in full view – a possible echo of the "aristocratic consumerism" characteristic of some shopping streets in London, such as Goldsmith's Row in Cheapside.[25] Another likely reference behind this comparison are the jewels that had been offered to Elizabeth I for the New Year in 1574, whose description reads: "*Item*, a jewel, being a crystal garnished with gold; Adam and Eve enamelled white, and a crystal pendant, garnished with gold, and four small pearls pendant".[26] Whatever the reference, critics have often looked for external or topical evidence to fully understand the scope of this passage, thus suggesting that the metaphor of the King's worth being locked up behind the crystalline lens of his eyes offers more than a traditional Petrarchan or optical play on words.

Sights/sites of exchange

28 Visual perception therefore becomes a site of exchange and transactions in *Love's Labour's Lost*. If beauty is bought by the judgment of the eye, and if eyes themselves "tender their own worth" (II.i.240) by displaying their splendour as in a shop – be it that of a foreigner or a freeman – seeing with affected eyes is then not essentially different from the chapman's trade. Revealingly enough, the men of Navarre and the women of France enter into negotiations from the very first moment they set eyes on each other.

The sight of the receipts that would settle the Aquitaine debt for which the Princess travels to Navarre in the first the place is indeed deferred and never actually shown onstage:

> KING. [...] if you prove it, I'll repay it back
> Or yield up Aquitaine.
> PRINCESS. We arrest your word.
> Boyet, you can produce acquittances
> For such a sum from special officers,
> Of Charles his father.
> KING. Satisfy me so.
> BOYET. So please your grace, the packet is not come
> Where that and other specialties are bound.
> Tomorrow you shall have a sight of them.
> *Love's Labour's Lost*, II.i.156-163

29 The production of acquittances would "arrest the king's words" in at least two ways: although this phrase is to be understood as "I take your words as security",[27] ocular evidence would also literally "stop" the king's words. Looking at the exact sum due to the Princess at such an early stage would quite simply put an end to all suits in the play – both amorous and legal – by cutting short the French embassy. The sight of specialties would therefore render the chapman's tongue useless and speculation unworkable.

30 Here, on the contrary, with no reference to any fair value, the ladies are free to discuss the terms of all prospective contracts in the play. The "contractual basis"[28] of most exchanges in the play is then destabilised to the core, forever deferring the closing of a deal.[29]

31 One of the many witty exchanges between Rosaline and Berowne offers an apt illustration of such dynamics:

> BEROWNE. When we greet,
> With eyes' best seeing, heaven's fiery eye,
> By light we lose light. Your capacity
> Is that of nature that to your huge store
> Wise things seem foolish and rich things but poor.
> ROSALINE. This proves you wise and rich, for in my eye –
> BEROWNE. I am a fool, and full of poverty.
> ROSALINE: But that you take what doth to you belong,
> It were a fault to snatch words from my tongue.
> *Love's Labour's Lost*, V.ii.374-382

32 Berowne first unfolds a common *cliché* of both optics and poetry: when one looks at the sun, although the sun is the main provider of light, it blinds us and prevents one from seeing for a while. Hence light paradoxically deprives us of light. Berowne also draws a comparison between this common optical knowledge and Rosaline's capacity to change wealth into poverty, to cheapen the value of things – which takes us back to the relativity of praise, never quite adding up to the prize expected by the seller. Rosaline, following up on Berowne's analogy, is about to formulate a visual judgement ("for in my eye") when she is abruptly interrupted by Berowne. He "arrests" her words and concludes the deal by tendering his own mean worth. The homophonic equation he suggests between two kinds of "full" makes it clear and audible that Rosaline may

never be satisfied, her desire never fulfilled but only filled by a poor fool. Far from being contented with such an agreement or settlement, Rosaline snaps at Berowne for having "snatched" words from her, for having stolen or conveyed[30] the final price she wanted to assign herself. As a result, Rosaline's visual estimation ("for in my eye") remains unspoken and the mutual agreement of the two parties deferred indefinitely.

33 All eyes and visual judgments in the play, supposedly apt at reckoning beauty better than the chapman's tongue, are in fact brought into a "world-without-end bargain" (v.ii.763). Seeing is not a unilateral process in the play, as it is both intromissive and extramissive – to use optical terms – or, to use economic words, as it works both and alternately as a credit and as a debt. The balancing moment when eyes meet like prizer and prized on a par with fixed parts to play can only come after further silent dealings and productions of acquittances – negotiations too long for a play.

NOTES

1. Frances Yates, *A Study of* Love's Labour's Lost, Cambridge, CUP, (1936), 2013, p. 149.

2. Neil Vallely, "Light, the Eye and Visual Epistemologies in *Love's Labour's Lost*" in Delphine Lemonnier-Texier and Guillaume Winter, eds., *Lectures de* Love's Labour's Lost, Rennes, PUR, 2014, 177-192, p. 177.

3. I have here given only two examples in a much longer list of articles dealing with the subject. See for example my forthcoming article entitled "Shakespare's Alhazen: *Love's Labour's Lost* and the History of Optics". The play was very early considered as illustrating a number of optical theories. In the "early history of the play" section of his introduction, William C. Carroll, while tracing the "robust literary circulation" of *Love's Labour's Lost*, mentions for instance the echoes of Shakespeare's comedy found in "a treatise on optics" (*Love's Labour's Lost*, ed. William C. Carroll, Cambridge, CUP, The New Cambridge Shakespeare, 2009, p. 38).

4. *OED*, praise v. I and II.4 and 5.

5. All quotations are taken from the reference edition chosen for the *agrégation* (2015-2016): *Love's Labour's Lost*, ed., William C. Carroll, *op. cit.*

6. *Ibid.*, p. 82.

7. "The language of female beauty parod[ies] the inflationary and cheapening effects of courtly hyperbole", Lorna Huston, *The Invention of Suspicion. Law and Mimesis in Shakespeare and Renaissance Drama*, Oxford, OUP, 2011, p. 301.

8. References to plays other than *Love's Labour's Lost* are to William Shakespeare, *The Complete Works*, eds. John Jowett, William Montgomery, Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, 2nd edition, Oxford, OUP, 2005.

9. See William C. Carroll, *op. cit.*, n. 422, p. 157.

10. The word "tokens" may also have referred to spots showing on the men's bodies, indicating disease, especially the plague, a sense recorded by the *OED* (token n., 2b), although all examples of such usage listed under this entry date from 1634 and after.

11. *OED*, fairing n., 1.

12. v.ii.43. For the description of the King's long-winded praise in rhyme, see v.ii.6-10.

13. The word "misprision" appears once in the play. It is used by Berowne when commenting upon Dumaine's affection: "A fever in your blood? Why then, incision / Would let her out in saucers. Sweet misprision!" (IV.iii.89-90). The line is quoted among *OED* examples of sense 2.b (under misprision, n.[1]): "the mistaking of one thing for another; a misunderstanding; a mistake". And, interestingly enough, the word is etymologically related to mispricing. Therefore, not only does Berowne again use a word that could ironically apply to himself, but he also chooses a term that further buttresses the link between the two pairs affection/infection and praising/mispricing.

14. This also holds true of Costard and Jaquenetta, seeing as the former ends up accusing Armado of being responsible for the latter's pregnancy. Whether the audience is to believe that Armado is indeed the father or that Jaquenetta is expecting Costard's child is never elucidated, therefore obscuring the nature of Armado's new vow and the contract sealed between the Spanish braggart and the dairymaid.

15. Colours and "painting" in general are key themes in the play, as is illustrated by the early debate between Armado and Moth about the dangers of white and red (I.ii.75-89). Revealingly enough, one of the now obsolete senses of "fair" ("clean" or "pure") also applies to colours (and was then a synonym for bright, pure, not dull or muddy). See *OED*, fair, *adj*. and *n.*[1], III.11.a.

16. For further analysis of the "silent rhetoric" idea, see Laetitia Coussement-Boillot and Christine Sukič, eds., *"Silent Rhetoric, "Dumb Eloquence": The Rhetoric of Silence in Early Modern English Literature*, Paris, Université Paris Diderot, Cahiers Charles V, n. 43, 2007.

17. *OED*, utter, *v.*[1], I. 1.

18. This also appears clearly in Berowne's description of Boyet:

This fellow pecks up it as pigeons peas,
And *utters* it gain when Goth doth please.
He is wit's pedlar, and retails his wares
At wakes and wassails, meetings, markets, fairs. (V.ii.315-318, my emphasis)

19. *OED*, utter, *v.*[1], 2. a.

20. About the importance of reckoning in the play see Cynthia Lewis, "'We Know What We Know': Reckoning in *Love's Labour's Lost*", *Studies in Philology,* Vol. 105, No.2 (Spring, 2008), p. 245-264. In this article, Lewis explains how reckoning "rang[es] from simple counting to more complex formulations of value – that, taken together, shape the play both subtly and profoundly and thus reward close inspection", p. 246.

21. William C. Carroll, *op. cit.*, n. 119, p. 98.

22. Costard attributes value to coins according to their names, rather than their true weight, as is made clear in his remark on the fairness of the word "remuneration" compared to a French crown: "Why, it is a fairer name than French crown" (III.i.122-123 and n. 123, p. 99). This passage is another instance of how the word "fair" is given many different meanings in the play.

23. I would here like to thank J. Turner for his insightful questions and suggestions about Costard's unique status within this paradoxical economy.

24. Ian W. Archer, *The Pursuit of Social Stability: Social Relations in Elizabethan London*, Cambridge, CUP, 1991, p. 134, quoted in John Michael Archer, "Love's Labour's Lost", in Richard Dutton and Jean E. Howard, eds., *A Companion to Shakespeare's Works*, Vol. 3: *The Comedies*, Oxford, Blackwell, 2003, p. 320-337, p. 326.

25. John Michael Archer, *op. cit.*, p. 325.

26. John Nichols, *The Progress and Processions of Queen Elizabeth*, London, 1823, Vol. 1, p. 380.

27. William C. Carroll, *op. cit.*, n. 157, p. 88.

28. I am borrowing the phrase from Henry Woudhuysen's introduction to the Arden edition of the play (*Love's Labour's Lost*, H. R. Woudhuysen, ed., London, Methuen Drama, Arden Shakespeare, 1998, p. 18).

29. This extends to generic issues, as the comic contract itself lacks a regular sealing in *Love’s Labour’s Lost*, with the protraction of all marriages. See for example Lynda E. Boose, “The Comic Contract and Portia’s Golden Ring”, *Shakespeare Studies*, Vol. 20, 1988, p. 241-254 and in particular the passage about the “Jack and Jill” formula (p. 242): “For Shakespeare [illegible], the comic contract is always fulfilled through a formulaic closure of marriage that at times seems so blatantly imposed on top of a recalcitrant narrative as to approach becoming a device that parodies the demands of the patriarchal formula it so determinedly reproduces. [illegible] This “Jack shall have Jill and all shall be well” closure unites the various plot oppositions and emblematically dramatizes a model of social harmony. But more importantly, it re-presents the ultimate wedding between the play and audience and thus fulfils the generic obligations of comic form [illegible]. Yet within Shakespeare’s complex formulation, fulfilling that indenture provides precisely the context that allows for subverting it.”

30. “To convey” could also mean “to steal”, as recalled by Pistol in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*: “‘Convey’, the wise it call. ‘Steal’? Foh, a fico for the phrase!”, I.iii.26-27.

ABSTRACTS

Although a number of more or less recent studies of *Love’s Labour’s Lost* have documented the optical dimension of vision and light-related metaphors in the play, little has been said about how visual perception also relates to a network of economic transactions. The present article explores the ways in which the economy of vision in *Love’s Labour’s Lost* gives rise to a paradoxical vision of economy.

Si la dimension optique des métaphores de la vision et de la lumière ont déjà fait l’objet de plusieurs études plus ou moins récentes consacrées à *Love’s Labour’s Lost*, le lien qui unit la perception visuelle aux nombreuses transactions économiques qui jalonnent la pièce a plus rarement été isolé et analysé. Le présent article retrace la façon dont l’économie de la vision dessine aussi une vision paradoxale de l’économie.

INDEX

Keywords: beauty, trade, Love’s Labour’s Lost, negotiation, fairness, praise, numbers, vision
Mots-clés: commerce, beauté, calcul, négociation, Peines d’amour perdues, vision

AUTHOR

ANNE-VALÉRIE DULAC

Université Paris 13